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ANGER RISING AGAINST CLIMATE COP-OUT

100,000 MARCH IN GLASGOW

SPECIAL REPORT
PAGES 2&3 AND 10&11



THE COP26 climate conference has failed to offer even the most basic measures to stop environmental destruction.

That was no surprise with, for example, at least 503 fossil fuel lobbyists admitted to the talks.

But there was another presence in Glasgow.

Protests, including 100,000 on the streets last Saturday, showed the rage against inaction at the top. It's time to step up the militancy against the politicians and capitalism.

FILTHY RICH MPs PROFITED FROM PANDEMIC

KICK OUT ALL TORY CROOKS

JOHNSON COVERS UP CORRUPTION >>PAGES 4&5



TECHNOLOGY



Leaders won't keep promises

WORLD LEADERS and bosses at Cop26 are keen to back new green technology.

Over 40 world leaders have committed to encouraging the development of new technology—especially low carbon technology.

For the most part, low carbon technology has been unreliable, expensive, and keeps the fossil fuel industry firmly in place.

A significant number of people present are calling for a shift to hydrogen power. There were also pledges to cut down on methane emissions and to protect woodland and rainforests from deforestation. Governments also pledged that they would make farming greener.

Of the over 100 countries present, just 45 countries had pledged on Monday to take action and provide investment into sustainable agriculture. Only 26 countries made commitments to make policy changes to curb farming emissions.

Just because world leaders sign pledges, it doesn't mean they have to follow them. These initiatives also ignore the larger, more immediate question of fossil fuels.

The priority has to be to leave fossil fuels in the ground. Some of those inside the conference have been forced to admit that the conference is failing.

Laurence Tubiana, the head of the European Climate Foundation and France's top negotiator, panned the conference and said, "There is no mechanism for ensuring delivery, no capacity to check these claims." "That is why I say greenwashing is the new climate denial," he added.

Failures at Cop26 will fuel the climate collapse

Leaders use meeting to protect their system, says Sophie Squire

THE COP26 climate conference in Glasgow has been a washout, with world leaders failing to come up with any meaningful solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The few promises made at Cop26 aren't enough to avoid climate disaster, despite world leaders celebrating them as victories.

According to Tory Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, the promises made at Cop26 mean that "the end of coal is in sight."

But coal pledges were much less impressive than they were presented. It was initially reported that 190 countries had signed a pledge to reduce coal use. But only 77 countries actually signed up.

Only ten countries have pledged to phase out coal completely.

The Cop26 conference is utterly failing to do what even world leaders said it should do, and come up with a plan to stop temperatures rising above 1.5 degrees.

If pledges are kept, the world is predicted to warm by 1.8 degrees according to a report by the International Energy Agency.

Cop26 has failed, but the conference will not be a failure for most in attendance. In reality, Cop26 is functioning just as it's meant to.

It has been an opportunity for bosses to lobby governments whilst leaders delay taking any action while hiding behind insufficient promises.

Cop26 has been a conference for those in power to decide on how they maintain their destructive system.



PROTESTERS IN London demand system change

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

The Revolutionary Alternative to Capitalism's Climate Disaster

Sunday 14 November, 2pm on Zoom

Speakers include ● Sabrina Fernandez (Brazil) ● Alex Callinicos (Britain) ● Özde Özbay (Turkey) ● John Molyneux (Ireland) ● Gyekye Tanoh (Ghana) ● Michelle Robidoux (Canada)
Register for your (free) ticket at bit.ly/revait1121

What comes next for the climate movement?

THE PROTESTS around Cop26 in Glasgow have shown that hundreds of thousands of people are angry about climate change and the politicians who do nothing about it.

They are also proof that the climate movement can still mobilise large numbers of people.

Most of the speakers at the Glasgow demonstrations on 5 and 6 November were clear, the system must change completely to fight climate change.

Others were more explicit and



Glasgow refuse workers on strike

said capitalism must be uprooted to save the planet.

The protests also made the link between fighting climate change and fighting against oppression.

After Cop26 there will be a discussion about how to capitalise on this anger and build a stronger, larger climate movement.

The politicians, the corporations and the system they defend won't be defeated simply by marches.

It will take more disruption and militancy than we have seen so

far. Only a terrified ruling class is likely to make even the most basic concessions towards the policies needed to avert catastrophe.

Deepening the links between the climate movement and organised workers must be a priority. Workers' action can turn off the root of profit.

The widespread support for the Glasgow refuse strikers was a positive step. But most of the trade unions still back an economy based on fossil fuels. After Cop26 we must build a big, ferocious climate revolt.

Marches for climate justice flood streets across Britain

TENS OF Thousands of climate activists across Britain joined the Cop26 day of action on Saturday.

Local Cop26 coalitions and hubs, climate activists, anti-racists and left wing groups joined rallies and protests to demand climate justice.

In Bristol a Sudanese protest joined the climate march with anti-capitalist politics at the centre of speeches. Around 7,000 protesters chanted "Kill the Tories, not the bees".

In Oxford, several thousand people marched and rallied.

Union delegations and banners from the Unison NUJ, NEU and UCU unions were on the march.

Around 3,000 people marched in Liverpool. The rally heard statements about produce coming through the Liverpool ports, sent from activists in North Carolina, Mozambique and from Creuza, a female indigenous leader from the Kraho people of Brazil.

Up to 1,000 activists demanded climate action in Norwich where a statement was read from Amazonian indigenous people in Brazil. The Norfolk Cop26 Coalition has been

renamed the Norfolk Climate Justice Coalition to continue fighting for the planet.

Around 500 people joined the action in York chanting "Whose streets? Our streets" as they marched through the city centre. There were over 600 in

Weymouth, Dorset, plus a smaller demonstration in Dorchester.

Placards

Some 400 protested in Swansea. In Cardiff anti-racist banners and Palestinian flags were on the march alongside placards demanding climate action.

In Brighton over 1,000 marched from the Level alongside XR's Lightship Greta boat prop and samba band to a rally. Speakers included XR, Brighton trades council and local Green Party politicians.

Elsewhere over 1,000 protested in Leeds, as well as some 1,000 in Plymouth. In Derby, 300 joined the action, with 300 in Chesterfield and 400 in Portsmouth.

There were 2,000 in Birmingham and 1,000 in Nottingham.

Full article at bit.ly/Cop26demos



Climate protesters in Swansea form a feeder march from a Gower beach

20,000 protesters march in London

by SAMORD

AROUND 20,000 people marched through central London on Saturday to protest against world leaders' climate inaction at the Cop26 conference.

The protest was one of over 250 across the world called by the Cop26 Coalition.

The march brought together climate change campaigners, trade unionists, indigenous groups, socialists and many others.

There were a few Extinction Rebellion groups, banners from some NGO campaigns that backed the protest and a couple of Labour Party branches.

There was a group of Sudanese activists protesting against the military coup as well as calling for climate measures.

But many people—not members of any group or party—came as individuals.

They were desperate to see some effective climate action.

PCS union member Diane told Socialist Worker, "We can't stay in our living rooms anymore and ignore climate change.

"We hear a lot of talk but no action. We need a clear plan and strategy."

She added, "The trade unions know social justice and environmental issues are workers' issues—they affect everyone.

"Workers always lead change, not the world leaders."

Unite activist Donovan agreed. He said, "Unite is one of the biggest unions. We have a platform to fight for green jobs.

"Unions can bring awareness to climate change on a large scale, not just global issues but locally as well."

Emission

The protesters marched two miles from the Bank of England to Trafalgar Square.

Placards and banners included, "It's not emission impossible," and "Workers of the world unite—system change not climate change."

Protesters Sumayyah and Tom from London were on the protest to demand an end to fossil fuel extraction.

Sumayyah told Socialist Worker, "We need to make sure companies don't get away with half of what

they are already doing.

"We need to regulate those corporations and put the planet before profit."

Tom said, "There have been 25 previous Cop climate summits and there's been no shift to net zero, which is just a plaster anyway."

"We need to stop extracting fossil fuels and start building renewables."

At Trafalgar Square, speakers included a Palestinian activist from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. They said, "Climate justice is not just about the climate, Palestinians know this all too well."

"Living under and resisting occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid, struggling to control our land and resources, makes us one of the most vulnerable communities to the climate crisis."

"To Palestinians, climate change isn't just an environmental issue, it's a political issue."

On other pages...

Two days of revolt on the Clyde at Cop26
>> Pages 10&11



Students are furious at Cop26

Students' marches give a boost

SOPH IS a student in Manchester where 1,500 people marched alongside a feeder trade union bloc of 500. She told Socialist Worker, "It was great to have such a big turnout with so many groups, such as Stand Up To Racism and Extinction Rebellion (XR).

"Everybody is now noticing how much is going wrong, and how little the people in charge are doing about it."

Alex, a student in Sheffield reported that up to 4,000 people joined a huge march to the town hall.

Student societies, XR activists, school student strikers and trade unions joined, as well as a student feeder march of around 1,000.

"We're angry about the unwillingness of leaders to act despite clear evidence that the climate is being adversely affected by corporations destroying the world," said Alex.

Islands

Alex added, "Protesting means world leaders have extra pressure to deliver."

"That won't happen by politely asking them when they're happy on their private islands far from the poverty and chaos caused by climate change."

Alex thinks that after Cop26 the main challenge will be "maintaining intensity and mass pressure and the numbers involved in the campaigns".

Soph said that after Cop26 activists have to fight for change on a large scale.

"It's not just about climate change but linking different areas together—climate refugees and green jobs as we move away from fossil fuels."

"It's becoming more and more obvious that capitalism creates crises. We won't be able to get out of this catastrophe without abandoning the system."



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Corruption scandal—Tories used pandemic for profit

It's not just the bodies that Boris Johnson let pile high—it's the cash too, reports Sam Ord

AS WORKING class people suffered mass deaths during the first phases of the Covid pandemic, Tory MPs and their mates filled their bank accounts.

Tory MP Owen Paterson announced his resignation last week following revelations of his shameless lobbying for big businesses.

Behind the scandalous lies and appalling plunder by the political elite and their business backers lies their drive to profit from pandemic suffering.

Boris Johnson initially backed Paterson. But he was forced to U-turn to try and end the wave of sleaze allegations.

On top of Paterson's £81,932 salary, he took home £8,333 a month to lobby on behalf of healthcare company Randox Laboratories.

As Johnson announced Covid safety restrictions in March 2020, The government handed Randox a £133 million contract to manufacture Covid tests.

Contracts

The Sunday Times newspaper has revealed a phone call on 9 April last year between Paterson and the Tory peer Lord Bethell, who was the minister responsible for handing out contracts.

According to documents, civil servants were trying to cover for the fact that Randox did not have the equipment it needed.

In an email, an official wrote that Matt Hancock, health secretary at the time, would send a letter to universities "asking for loans of the various things we need".

Campuses would have to give up testing resources and send them to Randox, they continued.

Randox later received a

£347 million contract. Paterson's lobbying interests extended to sausage company Lynn's Country Foods who paid him £12,000 for just 24 hours of work each year.

Last month the independent Parliamentary Standards Commissioner found Paterson had breached the tame paid advocacy rules.

Paterson had, on 16 occasions, used his House of Commons office for meetings relating to his private business interests.

He failed on a number of occasions to declare those interests.

The Committee on Standards suggested Paterson should just be suspended from the Commons for 30 days. This was set to be voted on in parliament.

Punishment

In an effort to save him even this punishment, Johnson instructed Tory MP Andrea Leadsom to put forward an amendment and set up a committee to prevent his suspension.

Tory whips threatened MPs with the loss of local funding unless they fell into line. MPs duly voted for it.

But the stench of corruption was too much.

The government was forced to go back on itself and announced there would be a vote on Paterson's suspension.

Then Paterson resigned, cancelling future parliamentary votes.

In his self-pitying resignation letter he blamed the "cruel world" of politics.

He's right, but the cruelty is the treatment of ordinary people and the contempt politicians have for the rest of us.



What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

BUSTED—OWEN PATERSON and Boris Johnson

Starmer's Labour offers no hope of opposition to robbery by MPs

THE TORIES can get away with corruption and sleaze when there's no real opposition.

From the beginning of the pandemic, Labour leader Keir Starmer spent nearly all his time agreeing with Boris Johnson in a show of "national unity".

And most trade union leaders went down the same path.

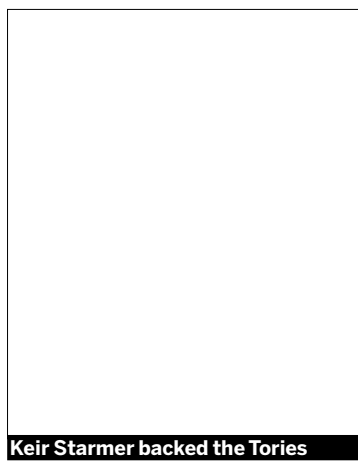
Although Labour can now pick up on details of outrageous behaviour, it never offered a different strategy to that which put people before profits during the horror of the pandemic.

That's why the Tories manage to survive scandal after scandal.

They escaped after senior adviser Dominic Cummings showed there was one law for the rich and another for the rest.

They have not been called to account for the £37 billion spent on a failing test and trace system.

Johnson even survived revelations that he would rather "let the bodies pile high" than push forward plans for a third lockdown.



Keir Starmer backed the Tories

Above all, the government remains ahead in the opinion polls even though it presides over one of the worst death rates in the world.

Plus, it is still not taking any of the precautions necessary today.

Starmer last week called on Johnson to "answer, apologise and act" over sleaze allegations.

It's got through to him that there is a chance to inflict real

blows on the Tories. But so much of the criticism is phrased as a defence of "parliamentary standards" and the "good name" of British democracy.

Labour supports essentially the same system as now.

Starmer even chose last week to announce that Labour was no longer in favour of abolishing the House of Lords.

Parliament is an unrepresentative, unaccountable front that covers for the real relations of power.

As the pandemic highlighted, it is a mechanism for the enrichment of the tiny elite of business people who have an inside track to ministers and top civil servants.

Instead of seeking to polish and rescue parliament's reputation, Labour and the unions should be campaigning for a complete clean out of corrupted MPs.

And the cosy dinners, the freebie trips and holidays, the football match tickets and the fat extra salaries to deliver for corporations must all go.

The House of Lords is a reward for rich Tories

Money is what makes parliament go round

IF YOU'RE rich and want a place of power in politics, donate £3 million to the Conservative Party and you're likely to gain a peerage.

In the last seven years every Tory party treasurer has given at least £3 million and been offered a seat in the House of Lords.

Multimillionaire donors "seem almost guaranteed" a peerage, according to a report by the Open Democracy thinktank

and the Times newspaper.

The report claims peerages "appeared to be a reward" to thank wealthy donors for funding the Tory party.

A former Tory Party chairman told The Sunday Times, "Once you pay your £3 million, you get your peerage."

Since the Tories' takeover of parliament in 2010, nine of the party's former treasurers—who

donated huge amounts—were given a position as a Lord.

Some 22 of the biggest donors have gained a seat in the House of Lords in the past 11 years.

Their combined donation amounts to a total of £54 million.

This is not a coincidence—money talks.

The Liberal Democrats have ennobled five donors and the Labour Party, two.

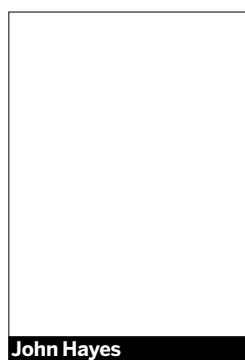
Tories cash in as people suffer

AS ORDINARY people lost their jobs and relied on furlough, many MPs increased their income from the start of the pandemic.

Former prime minister Theresa May has made £842,526 giving paid speeches since March 2020.

These high paid speeches have addressed bank JP Morgan Chase and World 50 Inc—an exclusive club for senior executives.

Tory MP Bill Wiggan gained £25,000 in bonuses and fees from a tax dodging wealth management firm in Bermuda. This was



John Hayes

in addition to his £49,140 director's salary.

MP and former Tory energy minister John Hayes has been paid £150,000 by oil firm BB Energy over three years.

This was on top

of his standard MP salary of nearly £82,000.

Last month he and other Tory MPs called for fracking to resume. He has also compared climate activists to "radical Islam".

Hayes recently opposed a plan to bring forward a ban on selling new petrol and diesel cars. He boldly claimed a delay would allow "fossil fuels to become even cleaner".

This is why parliament cannot be relied on for fundamental climate action.

Johnson's flat breaches rules

DOMINIC Cummings, Boris Johnson's former senior adviser, says that the attempt to discredit the system that found then MP Owen Paterson guilty was "really about the PM and his own lies".

In particular, the expensive refurbishment of the

Downing Street flat.

Standards commissioner Kathryn Stone has carried out three investigations into Johnson in the past three years.

Twice he was found in breach of the rules on declarations of benefits. The upgrade of the Number 10 flat

is now expected to be the subject of another inquiry.

The findings of another inquiry by the Electoral Commission was handed to the Tories just before the government attempted to smash up the existing standards regime.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

RADICAL CLIMATE ACTION IS MORE THAN SLOGANS

TO AVOID catastrophic climate change we need to change everything—we need a different kind of system.

And most of the tens of thousands of protesters who attended the protests against Cop26 last weekend would agree.

"System change, not climate change" has increasingly become one of the most popular slogans on climate demonstrations in recent years.

The popularity of this phrase—and the ideas behind it—are down to the work of the left within the climate movement.

Another sign that the movement is radicalising is that many mainstream forces are copying language from the movements on the streets.

Increasingly NGOs and even some politicians are using more radical sounding phrases.

Former US president Barack Obama at Cop26 told young people to "stay angry" about climate change.

But his conclusion wasn't so radical—don't be "too pure" and "Vote like your life depends on it."

Such speeches are a deliberate effort to head off an assault on

capitalism itself. The message from Obama and the NGOs is that the movement must direct its focus towards politics suitable within the existing system.

System change is reduced to system reform. Instead of doing away with the system, it becomes a plea to sustain it.

On the protests last week, socialists, Extinction Rebellion, Labour, Green Party members, trade unionists and more marched alongside various NGOs.

And there were many people on the demonstrations who don't back any particular group.

Unity in action is powerful. But just celebrating a vibrant movement is not enough.

There is a battle of ideas within the movement. At the People's



System change is a call for the end to fossil fuel capitalism

TEAR DOWN THE BORDERS

REFUGEES TRAPPED at the Polish-Belarusian border in eastern Europe are being used as weapons by two states with reactionary governments.

Poland is blocking people from entering the country, while Belarus wants to push out migrants from the Middle East and Africa.

Around 1,000 were taken to the Polish border on Monday—and then not allowed back into Belarus. Thousands of refugees and migrants have been stuck in freezing conditions in the

surrounding forests without food or shelter since October.

Poland claims an "armed" mass of refugees is building at the border. The reality is barbed wire fences and tooled-up troops ready to repel refugees. Lithuania, meanwhile, said it was moving additional troops to its border with Belarus. Refugees mainly coming from Iran, Syria and Iraq are vilified.

But it's not just in eastern Europe that this is happening. In Britain home secretary Priti Patel is set on keeping all refugees out, even at the

cost of drownings.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen denounced Belarus. She said the use "of migrants for political purposes is unacceptable". But that's what every government in Europe does.

Our solidarity is with the refugees in Belarus, northern France and everywhere else in the world. Let's hope they can tear down the barriers governments build to keep them out.

Borders across Europe and in Britain must go.



ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Can Johnson escape another scandal?

IT'S UNDENIABLE that British politics is institutionally corrupt. The most visible form is how ex-ministers and senior civil servants seek to cash in on their experience and connections when they leave government.

It is engaging in this practice that has been the undoing for the wretched Owen Paterson. The collapse of the dodgy financial firm Greensill Capital exposed the greed, not just of ex-prime minister David Cameron, but of retired officials who stuck their snouts in the trough.

Boris Johnson's attempt to rescue Paterson and rewrite the rules governing MPs—reversed in 24 hours—has earned him an enormous amount of flak, especially from within his own Tory ranks.

It's remarkable how Johnson engineered the shambles in Westminster while supposedly saving the planet in Glasgow.

There's widespread speculation that Johnson's real target was Kathryn Stone, the independent parliamentary commissioner for standards.

Dominic Cummings has suggested Johnson wanted to force her out for fear she might turn her attention to the scandal surrounding the refurbishment of his Downing St flat.

I wouldn't hold your breath. I can't think of a British government that has been brought down by corruption.

David Lloyd George was the most corrupt prime minister since the development of mass politics. The centenary of his fall from power comes next year.

Lloyd George turned the sale of honours, which had been practised by previous prime ministers, into a business. He raised £3 million—the equivalent of £141 million today—for his own private political fund. This dwarfs the paltry £1 million Cameron is alleged to have got from Greensill.

The historian A J P Taylor adds that “the Conservative Party took an equal cut”.

But corruption didn't bring Lloyd George down. His Tory partners tired of serving under a Liberal and revolted when he tried to distract them by provoking a war with the newly independent Turkish republic.

The 1963 Profumo scandal—which was about sex and spying in high places, not money—certainly contributed to the feeling of a decadent aristocratic Tory regime.

Labour leader Harold Wilson exploited this to the hilt. But his Tory opponent, the ex-earl of Home, still nearly won the 1964 general election.

“Tory sleaze” undermined John Major's government in the 1990s. But its back had been broken by Black Wednesday—16 September 1992—when the pound was forced out of the European Monetary System despite a five percentage point hike in interest rates. The recently re-elected Tory government spent nearly five years waiting to die.

Expenses

The MPs' expenses scandal burst out in 2009, when Gordon Brown was Labour prime minister. But his government was already dead in the water thanks to the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2007-8—an event that Brown had boasted could never happen again.

So my guess is that, excluding something completely outrageous coming to light, Johnson will survive this mess of his own creation. Tory backbenchers may be disaffected, but he has delivered Brexit and a solid general election victory. Labour under the wooden right-wing leadership of Keir Starmer is no threat.

That doesn't mean it's plain sailing for Johnson. The biggest threat to his survival comes from the economy.

Last week the Bank of England predicted that inflation would peak at five percent next April.

It decided not to increase interest rates immediately because it fears that the burst of economic growth after pandemic restrictions were dropped last summer is dissipating—partly because Covid-19 infections remain so high.

Bank governor Andrew Bailey said “Inflation is clearly something that bites on people's household incomes.”

The Resolution Foundation warned about the budget, “real wage and income growth areset to grind to a halt next year.”

“Living standards stagnation remains the dominant feature of this era. In the 16 years leading up to 2008, average earnings grew by 36 percent. In the 16 years following 2008, real wages are forecast to have risen by just 2.4 percent in total”

It's this “cost of living crunch” that might do for Johnson.



HEALTH WORKERS protest earlier this year for better pay and conditions

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Tell patients ‘terribly sorry we cannot look after you’

by YURI PRASAD

HOSPITALS IN England are already at peak winter levels for bed occupancy, they say. And, they predict that things will only get worse as winter sets in.

The head of NHS Providers Chris Hopson said the situation was unprecedented.

“What's very, very striking in talking to our trust chief executives is how worried some of the very long-term leaders, who've been around a long time, are at this point,” he told Times Radio.

“What they are saying to us is they've never been so worried.”

One of those NHS bosses is Roland Sinker, the chief executive of Addenbrooke hospital in Cambridge.

Anxious

He said last week that he was “anxious and scared” that his hospital is “ceasing to function as a hospital”.

Sinker said he was having to consider a “plan B”, which is to say to patients, “I'm terribly sorry we can't look after you.”

“You're going to have to think about going to another hospital. And those hospitals need to be in London and Birmingham.”

Around 100 beds were closed to admissions last week at the hospital with 40 beds closed for infection control.

Because of the shortages in places elective surgeries have been cancelled for some patients.

Dave Kennington is a junior charge nurse and Unison co-chair at an East of England NHS trust.

He told Socialist Worker that while he understands management's frustration, there “needs to be more of a focus on the underlying causes of the problems.”

“We can't simply ‘blame Covid’, as the pandemic only caused a dramatic exacerbation of already existing issues. “Staffing was already a serious issue, with adequately staffed shifts being the exception rather than the rule.”

He added that if trusts don't have the money to

employ more agency staff, bosses should be “screaming this from the rooftops”

NHS bosses need to put far more pressure on the government, insists Kennington.

The current crisis, he says, is the result of “a decade of chronic underfunding of NHS trusts”.

“There have been funding cuts to mental health and anti-addiction projects, as well as cuts to other community resources, not least GP services.”

“This restricts the ability of community healthcare providers to prevent hospital admissions in the first place.”

“We also need an end to years of real-term pay cuts and a decent pay raise for health workers, which will help to improve staffing in the future,” he says.

Kennington describes trying to keep health workers and patients safe as a daily struggle.

“Towards the end of a recent shift, while acting as divisional supervisor, I visited one of my wards where a very pleasant, competent and hard-working nurse simply said, ‘We can't go on like this’.

“It broke my heart, she was right, and I had nothing to say.”

Health workers are feeling burnt out

THERE'S A grave danger that healthcare will now be hit by a further wave of staff resignations putting even more pressure on already understaffed hospitals.

“As a union, we've regularly had healthcare staff phoning us in tears, feeling that they cannot do it anymore,” said Kennington.

“Most healthcare staff are either approaching, or have achieved complete burn-out.”

“Many have—for the sake of their own physical and mental health—left frontline positions for less demanding roles, reduced their hours, or in many cases left

The NHS is under strain

healthcare altogether.

Kennington says that Tory policies are to blame.

“Whenever these issues have been at their worst, it has always been as a direct result of the government's reckless handling of the pandemic. It would have shown true solidarity with the staff on whom they depend, if senior executives and chief

nurses within trusts had publicly opposed these dangerous government policies.

“Instead of stealthy, unannounced visits by government ministers for PR photo-shoots with their sleeves rolled-up and a small handful of grinning staff members, they should be taken onto the wards on days when they have had multiple nurses and healthcare assistants taken away prior to the start of a shift.”

In many wards, says Kennington, every morning nurses have to be reallocated to other wards that are even more understaffed than their own.

Covid cases and deaths skyrocket across Europe

by YURI PRASAD

BRITAIN'S RECKLESS relaxation of Covid restrictions burnt a terrible trail for much of Europe to follow.

In July Britain's health secretary Sajid Javid told the public they must not "cower from the virus" but instead learn to live with it.

His words were warmly greeted by business leaders across the continent, demanding an end to Covid laws. But they also had an appeal to those sceptical about the virus and hostile to vaccinations.

We are all now paying a terrible price for the right's complacency.

The European director of the World Health Organisation, Hans Kluge, warned last Thursday that there could be 500,000 more coronavirus deaths in Europe this winter.

That's on top of the 1.4 million who have already died.

"Today, every single country in Europe and Central Asia is facing a real threat of Covid-19 resurgence, or is already fighting it," said Kluge.

"Over the past 5 weeks, Europe has seen a more than 55 percent increase in Covid cases. Last week, Europe and Central Asia accounted for 59 percent of all global cases and 48 percent of reported deaths."

The highest infection rates are to be found in central and eastern Europe where vaccination rates are catastrophically low.

In the last week some 8,000 have died in Russia, 3,800 in Ukraine and 3,000 in Romania—a country of just 19 million people.

Highest

Slovakia, where just 46 percent of the population is fully immunised, recorded 6,713 new cases in one day last week. That's its highest number of daily infections since the pandemic began.

In Poland, where 53 percent of people are fully vaccinated, the number of new cases jumped almost 50 percent on Thursday. It had already quadrupled in the preceding three weeks.

The rapid rise in cases can also be found in Belgium, France and Germany. It is here that the malign influence of Boris Johnson and the business lobby can most be felt.

Britain's lifting of all Covid restrictions in July coincided with a sharp rise in cases and deaths that continues today. The freeing of bosses to return to unfettered profit making, put pressure on rivals in Europe to do the same.

The result has been catastrophic. A huge rise in case numbers and hospitalisations in Belgium forced the government to reinstate mandatory mask wearing in public areas.

The order came just weeks after they abandoned the rules. The

HEALTH WORKERS in vaccination centres across Germany have administered 113 million Covid jobs

scale of the infection was emphasised as the US Centres for Disease Control told people not to travel to the European Union and Nato headquarters there.

Germany recorded almost 34,000 new cases on Wednesday last week, surpassing a record set in mid-December 2020.

Only 67 percent of the population is vaccinated, with the east and the south of the country significantly below the national average.

Vaccine refusal and Covid scepticism appear to have fuelled infection hotspots in Dresden, in the east, and Munich, in the south.

Ruling classes across Europe have shown they are neither interested nor capable of bringing in measures to control the virus because their primary concern is always profit.



On other pages...

Why racism is not banter
>>Page 15

Far right gain from vaccine hesitancy

THE INTRODUCTION of Covid passes has met opposition from people distrustful of politicians, which the far right has capitalised on.

For instance when Italy introduced a strict health pass last month, the northeastern port city of Trieste became the centre of protests.

In particular, dock workers argued that the measure infringed on their right to work. Two weeks later, Trieste emerged as the centre of a Covid outbreak.

The region's president, Massimiliano Fedriga said "It is the moment to say with



Covid pass protest in Trieste, Italy

clarity—enough idiocy."

Fedriga is a member of the far right League—which is currently backing the government. But other more openly fascist groups are backing protests.

In France a similar dynamic has taken place.

In Greece around 300 healthcare workers protested in central Athens against mandatory vaccines last week, a day after the government imposed restrictions on the unvaccinated.

They were protesting against calls for unvaccinated healthcare workers to be suspended from their jobs.

Millions of people are hit by Covid and the poverty of the system. They rightly distrust mainstream politicians' handling of the pandemic.

Wrongly they are providing a bolt hole for the far right and limiting our ability to overcome Covid.

FIGURE IT OUT

79 million
reported Covid infections across Europe so far

1.9 million
new European Covid cases recorded last week

1,450,000
people have died in Europe up to 5 November from Covid-19

Action must curb Covid

THE RAPID spread of Covid across Europe demands an immediate response.

As he issued his grim warnings, Kluge emphasised the need for basic precautions such as mask wearing, social distancing and good indoor ventilation.

He said 188,000 lives could be saved in Europe this winter if 95 percent of the population wore masks in public areas.

"We must change our tactics, from reacting to surges of Covid to preventing them from happening in the first place," he said.

But we can go further still and save even more

lives. Case numbers can be brought down by using effective contact tracing, vaccination campaigns organised in a far more democratic fashion—and lockdowns where necessary.

People should be told to work from home where possible. And there should be a limit to numbers using public transport to prevent the spread of infection there.

Business leaders and their right wing backers will no doubt howl with rage at such measures.

But labour and trade union movements across Europe must find the strength to resist them.



Elite-laid divisions behind war in Ethiopia

President Abiy Ahmed ruled by divide and rule—which could now mean his downfall, reports **Charlie Kimber**

A YEAR after he triggered a brutal civil war, Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed is facing a devastating defeat.

As rebels advance towards the capital of Addis Ababa, Abiy told his soldiers, “We will sacrifice our blood and bone to bury this enemy”.

But fighters from the region of Tigray, led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), have already taken the cities of Dessie and Kombolcha some 160 miles from the capital.

The 12 months of fighting, in a country of 110 million people, has created hundreds of thousands of refugees and widespread famine.

Both sides have carried out attacks on civilians.

But last week Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that “the big numbers of violations” are linked to Ethiopian forces and their Eritrean allies.

The UN report found several Ethiopian military camps were used to torture captured Tigray forces or civilians suspected of supporting them. Others were detained in “secret locations” and military camps across the country.

Pushed

The TPLF led the country for 27 years until 2018, when it was pushed aside and Abiy took over. Years of demonstrations, strikes and road blockades by ordinary people forced out his predecessor.

With opposition rising against policies that favoured the rich, Ethiopia's elites turned to inciting ethnic divisions.

Abiy was feted by the West and given the Nobel Peace Prize for ending the war with Eritrea.

He then abolished the ruling party, a coalition that included the TPLF, and set up his own Prosperity Party which the TPLF did not join.

He also launched a massive programme of privatisation.

When last year the TPLF refused to cancel elections in Tigray, Abiy ordered an invasion. He declared

BACK STORY

Ethiopia's national government declared war on the northern region of Tigray in November last year

● For 27 years Tigrayans were at the centre of the Ethiopian government

● Former Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenawi ran a regime designed to ram through industrial expansion

● Current prime minister Abiy Ahmed forced the Tigrayans out—and also turned to repression

victory after three weeks of fighting. But the widespread massacres, sexual violence and imposed famine saw people flock to the TPLF. And they were soon defeating the central government's forces.

Abiy, fearing his army would be overwhelmed, declared a unilateral ceasefire in June and blockaded Tigray cutting off most food supplies and international aid.

But it was too late to stop the rebellion and now his whole regime could be swept away.

Ethiopia has long been a close ally of the West. This was particularly true when Meles Zenawi was prime minister from 1995 until 2012.

He was part of former Labour leader Tony Blair's Commission for Africa and supported the march of neoliberalism across the continent.

But the West is now nervous that Abiy is going to fall, triggering instability across Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Sudan.

At its heart the war between Abiy and the TPLF is a battle between competing elites. Hope lies only in ordinary people overcoming ethnic divisions and returning to the powerful protests of 2016-18.



On other pages...

Britain's crimes in Kenya—past and present >>Page 17

TPLF FORCES march captured Ethiopian army soldiers through the city of Mekelle in June

UNITED STATES

Disillusion with president Biden gives Republicans shock election victories

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden and the Democratic party suffered a heavy blow last week as Republican Glenn Youngkin won the election for governor of Virginia.

It's a rejection of Biden's first year in office—and points to how Donald Trump could return to the White House.

Biden won Virginia by 10 percentage points a year ago. Until recently the Democrat Terry McAuliffe was expected to win the governor position easily.

He should have done. Youngkin is a candidate from the rich for the rich.

Forbes magazine estimates his personal fortune as £325 million. He contributed £15 million to his own campaign.

Virginia has also seen important workers' struggles recently such as the strike by 3,000 Volvo truck workers.

But disillusion with Biden led to the Republicans' victory. And it's not just happening in Virginia. In New Jersey, where Biden won by 16 percentage points last year, the Democrats only just held on to the governor position.

But Democrat Steve Sweeney, the veteran New Jersey senate president, lost his seat to Republican truck driver Edward Durr who spent only £113 on his campaign. Sweeney had been the chamber's leader since 2010.

A recent national survey by NBC News found that 44 percent of those polled strongly disapproved of Biden and only 19 percent strongly approved of the job he was doing.

That's a result of his failure to halt coronavirus, his lack of action over evictions and rising rents, and higher prices that are slashing workers' living standards.

Youngkin held on to the base that had voted for Trump by running a vile campaign inciting racism.

He attacked critical race theory—even though no Virginia schools teach it. And under the cover of “parents' rights” he demanded that schools should be able to ban books such as Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved*.

At a recent rally, Youngkin told the crowd, “We decide that we're going to take the power of our

children's education.

“This is a defining moment to the future of our commonwealth. A defining moment where we can stand up and say no to this progressive liberal agenda taking over.”

This was enough for Trump to say, “I'll tell you what, Glenn Youngkin is a great gentleman, truly successful.”

Youngkin did take some steps to distance himself from the more fascistic layers of Trump's supporters. He described the saluting of a flag flown at the 6 January Capitol riots by those attending a Republican rally as “weird and wrong”.

But his greatest weapon was the Democrats' failures. It's vital the left fights Biden's betrayals to make sure anger against him isn't grabbed by the right.

Sophie Squire

Language and far right

RICHARD Donnelly (Socialist Worker, 27 October) describes some of those who attacked the Capitol as “wacked out hippies of the so called cosmic right—new agers who worship Trump as the God Emperor”.

Richard is not describing the 1960s Hippies who were “wacky” in the sense of being eccentric, odd and way out on drugs and peace and love.

The hippies he is describing (the only thing they have in common with the original 60s is long hair) are right wing conspiracy theorists, racists, antisemites, far right and fascists.

The mental state of these “hippies” is irrelevant and to use such language tars the rest of us who experience mental distress as “wacky”.

You can hold reactionary views and happen to have a mental health disability, but you are not a reactionary because you have a mental health disability.

John Curtis
Ipswich

The end for the Tories?

I’M TELLING you all now that if Boris Johnson gets way with the omnishambles over Owen Paterson then we’re finished.

Can there ever have been such blatant corruption and contempt for the voters?

Surely, surely, this time people will dump the Tories? Even Labour looks better.

David Hemmings
Leicester

Left gains if proportional representation comes in

MARK DUNK (Letters, 3 November) says that proportional representation (PR) would only aid the right. I’m not so sure.

It’s certainly true that many of those who support PR do so out of despair that Labour could every win an election again.

So they put forward effectively a coalition of Labour, the Lib Dems, the Greens and the Scottish and Welsh nationalists.

That should be rejected. But there are better reasons for backing PR.

One is that it’s fairer. It is outrageous that there is



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Yorkshire cricket has a long history of anti-Asian racism

IT’S NO surprise to see Yorkshire County Cricket Club defending blatant racism against one of their own players, Azeem Rafiq, by claiming it was “banter”.

The history of the club in a county where so many Asian people live is riddled with discrimination going back decades.

From 1968 to 1992, the club maintained a policy that only Yorkshire-born cricketers could play for the county team—a self-imposed apartheid system.

This policy was code for a “whites only” colour bar, preventing thousands of Asian cricketers from hundreds of teams from ever representing Yorkshire.

It was forced to change and the first overseas black players arrived. But it was not until 2003 that the first British-Asian played

for Yorkshire. Yorkshire’s record is appalling.

When in 2003 Yorkshire player Darren Lehmann was banned for racially abusing a Sri Lankan opponent during a one-day international for Australia, the county refused to take any action.

Colin Graves, then Yorkshire chairman—now expected to return following widespread revulsion over the treatment of Azeem Rafiq—denied it was racist.

Graves, founder of the Costcutter store chain, is now running English cricket. Lehmann went on to coach Australia and was welcomed back to Headingley as coach of a team based at the Leeds ground.

Anti-racists should support the petition calling for the Yorkshire county committee to resign.

Football has shown we can push back the racists in sport.

Phil Turner
Sheffield

● A STUDY in the medical journal the Lancet last week showed that one in ten stillbirths and almost one in five foetal growth restriction cases are due to racial inequalities.

And that is intensified by the impact of socio-economic factors which disproportionately hit black and Asian people.

Whether your child lives or dies, and whether they prosper, is down to your class and the effects of racism. How dare the Tories claim that institutional racism does not exist.

Cleo Lawes
Glasgow

Tories won’t end conversion therapy

THE TORIES have finally started the six-week consultation for banning conversion “therapy”. This was first proposed by Theresa May’s government in 2018 and has gone through various delays and controversies.

But this “step forward” is, in some ways, a step backwards.

While they claim that they’re banning it, in reality there are several loopholes.

One of the most prominent is that conversion therapy will still be allowed to happen with “consent”. In reality it is a process of long term abuse that cannot be consented



Fighting for liberation

to. Similarly, they claim “an adult who wants to be supported to be celibate will be free to do so”.

This is already a common cover and will be used even more to justify conversion therapy.

The proposals also

include several “both sides” arguments, covering conversion to being LGBT+ as well as from.

This peddles the myth that people are being forced to be trans. It echoes the lies of Section 28 during Margaret Thatcher’s reign about schools converting people to be gay.

It will undoubtedly be used to further attack supportive parents of gender non-conforming children and trans right more generally.

We must be on the streets protesting for a real ban on conversion therapy.

Conie Cooley
York

Just a thought...

Learn from the win in Llanelli

BRILLIANT NEWS to hear that Gary Evans, branch secretary of Llanelli CWU union, has won his job back.

He was reinstated because fellow Royal Mail workers at the site struck for a day and promised more. That’s how the bosses’ agenda of attacking our class can be derailed.

They’ve been telling us for years that workers’ power is dead but apparently it isn’t.

J Richardson
Swansea

System fuels the rape rise

THE POLICE have recorded a record number of rape offences in England and Wales, according to official figures. The Office for National Statistics said recorded sexual offences had increased by 8 percent.

I think this sick system is getting worse. And it is making men’s behaviour worse.

Jane Lewis
Birmingham

Back councils that will fight

MUNICIPAL socialism may not be the whole answer to the problems the left faces (Socialist Worker, 3 November).

But that doesn’t mean winning council seats is irrelevant.

Councillors who are determined not to buckle to Tory threats could really make life difficult for the government.

Tom Picton
Liverpool

Scandal of picket charge

I’M DELIGHTED public disorder charges against a Unite union official on a picket line in south London were thrown out of court last week.

According to police, Ruth Hydon committed a crime—for which she could have been jailed for six months—because she blew a vuvuzela in the direction of a member of Serco’s management team.

She was charged under the anti-union laws. The charges were dismissed by Bromley magistrates court but it is a disgrace they were ever put forward.

Jeff Lorimer
South London

UNIONS

Glasgow strike puts workers at the centre

A STRIKE by Glasgow rubbish and recycling workers took place during the Cop26 conference—and became a focus for those trying to link questions of climate justice to those of social justice.

The action by Glasgow city council (GCC) cleansing workers continued all last week despite bosses attempting to use scabs.

The Scottish National Party-led council tried to persuade workers who maintain the city's parks and neighbourhoods to take on the strikers' jobs.

But workers refused to cross picket lines.

Strikers are demanding an improved pay offer from Cosla, the umbrella organisation of Scottish councils.

At the recycling centre in Polmadie, pickets were holding firm.

John O'Connor, the GMB union branch secretary, told Socialist Worker, "We want GCC to look at other local authorities and pay us in line with them."

"This is ultimately a pay dispute, but we have a list of demands to improve our jobs," John added.

Pickets

"The council has spent millions hiring agency staff who have no protection and get no sick or holiday pay. We want permanent contracts for them.

"We want our depots to be modernised, they're falling apart, and we're using equipment that is over six years old."

Striker Steven agreed that the council must make urgent changes to improve safety.

He added that at his depot, the only place to eat lunch is right next to a rubbish dump.

"There are flies and rats everywhere," he said.

Strikers said they need a pay rise desperately.

"We are striking for this pay rise simply to be able to keep going," said Paul.

Striking at the same time as Cop26 has brought increased media attention and solidarity to the strikes.

The GMB mobilised a good number of activists to join the climate strike demonstrations.

"Climate change will affect my children and their children. Something has got to be done and, like always, it will be the poor that will take the brunt of it," said Paul.

And while the protests at Cop26 rage, workers should be inspired to not only demand a pay rise and a better working environment but greener jobs as well.

TWO DAYS OF REVOLT ON THE CLYDE



While world leaders were wine and dine as the Cop26 climate conference opened in Glasgow last week, thousands took to the streets. Sophie Squire spoke to activists that braved torrential rain to demand the radical action we need to save the planet

THE FAILING politicians' pronouncements at the Cop26 climate conference were the mainstream focus in Glasgow last week. But the inspiring story was waves of resistance.

Protesters harried the big firms and the world leaders who were pumping out empty promises.

On Friday young, radical and ferociously angry climate strikers missed school and raged in the streets. A day later 100,000 people ignored driving rain and demanded climate action far beyond anything offered in the valueless conference hall.

And at the same time, striking cleansing strikers gave a reminder of the strength of workers when they fight back.

This was the real achievement of Cop26 protests—the re-emergence, at a higher level in Glasgow, of action shut off by the pandemic. Two days of revolt—many urgent weeks and months of struggle to come.

Friday School strikers swarm on the city

UP TO 30,000 protesters poured on to the streets on Friday as part of the global climate strike. The angry march was made up overwhelmingly of young people.

Charlie O'Rourke skipped school to march with his mother Cairsty and his sister.

He told the BBC that global leaders must "listen to the people", adding, "Don't just go for profit. Listen to what the planet needs."

Climate activist Greta Thunberg spoke at the end of the march in George Square.

She said, "Cop26 is a failure. We can't solve the problem of the climate crisis with the same methods that got us into a crisis in the first place."

"Cop is now just a PR event. It shouldn't be known as Cop. Instead, it should be known as the Global North Greenwash Festival.

"World leaders are in a bubble with their dreams of economic growth and tech solutions.

"But the facts don't lie. We need to cut emissions immediately, drastically, and for this, we need to change society fundamentally."

Greta ended her speech with a message for the climate movement. "They can't ignore us. They cannot

ignore our screams. I'm tired of their blah blah blah. You are what real leadership looks like."

Among the other speakers at the rally was Chris Mitchell, the GMB union convener of the striking cleansing workers.

"Climate justice and social justice are one and nobody will be left behind. Everybody here is fighting for the future—you are the future."

Activists who had travelled from around the world to join the protests at Cop26 joined the march.

Felipe, an Extinction Rebellion (XR) activist from Portugal, told Socialist Worker that Portugal had, like other countries, pledged to be net-zero by 2050. But it has recently announced it will open 14 new coal projects.

"We've lost faith in politicians and the governments to solve this problem," she said.

"Big corporations have no incentive to change. It's always profit over people."

"Ordinary people need a say in this. We need citizens' assemblies that could give people a voice. Workers are an important part of this. This should be a strike if everyone, every layer of society, should be striking with us."

After Thunberg's call to workers to join the march, a significant bloc of GMB union activists joined the march. Trade



unionists from the Unite, Unison and PCS unions greeted climate strikers as they marched into George Square.

Rodney travelled from the Philippines to attend the protest.

He told Socialist Worker that climate change is causing increasingly frequent weather disasters.

"Eight years ago, typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines. Unfortunately, 1,000 people are still missing," he said.

"It was rising temperatures in the Pacific Ocean that made the typhoon into a super typhoon. But the losses and damages that the typhoon caused were not a priority."

Marcher Eva said Cop26 reveals inequality.

"When I saw that world leaders were flying in on private jets, I couldn't believe it. I was so angry.

"They aren't even hiding that they



(main) **AROUND 100,000 people joined last Saturday's protest in central Glasgow**

PICTURE: ANDREW MCGOWAN

(above) **Protesters block a bridge across the Clyde** (below, left) **School strikers with Greta Thunberg on Friday's day of action**



jobs and greener jobs."

The massive protest in Glasgow on Friday showed a movement that is becoming increasingly angry at politicians' inaction and is demanding fundamental change.

Saturday Day of rage at world leaders

Up to 100,000 angry protesters filled the streets at Cop26.

The day of action began with disruption in the city as protesters blocked bridges.

Javier, who had travelled from Spain, "locked on" to other activists to block the road. He told Socialist Worker, "This kind of direct action is the best way to get our voices heard and to rebel against the system."

"If those in power don't solve their problem, we will keep going with these disruptive actions."

Kelvingrove Park, where the march gathered, swelled with protesters.

Jenny, a primary school student, told Socialist Worker, "It's sad seeing what big companies are doing to the Earth

"A lot of people my age care about the climate.

"That's why we need to protest."

Many of those at the demonstration had travelled thousands of miles to protest at

Cop26. Raouf is an Extinction Rebellion member who travelled from Tunisia to attend the protests in Glasgow.

"Chemical pollution is a massive problem in Tunisia," he told Socialist Worker. "Every day 16,000 tonnes of harmful substances, including uranium, are dumped in the sea."

"This is having an impact on people's health, and a lot of people are dying from cancer."

Raouf said that social movements—including the climate movement—have grown in the north African country in the wake of the 2011 revolution. "After the revolution, we didn't want to be quiet anymore," he explained.

"Finally, people are starting to wake up, especially after being confronted with hotter temperatures."

"Last summer, temperatures got up to 51 degrees Celsius—that's hard to ignore."

Activists from Sudan, India, Palestine and Uganda also joined the demonstration.

Enas, a Sudanese activist, told Socialist Worker, "The situation in Sudan has been exacerbated by climate change."

"Conditions which led to the Sudanese revolution of 2019 were made much worse by flooding, which was almost unheard of in a country that is mostly desert."

"The floods killed people and made others climate refugees."

She added, "It's also important to say that all of the world leaders that have tried to get their imperialist claws into Sudan will be attending Cop26."

Her delegation chanted, "Civilian rule for Sudan," throughout the march.

Farmers

And Indian activists marched in solidarity with Indian farmers, who have revolted against Narendra Modi's hard right government.

The slogans on the march were radical—and placards that linked climate crisis to capitalism were common.

Many trade unionists turned out, including from the Unison, GMB, NEU, EIS and UCU unions.

Margaret, a Unison activist, told Socialist it was essential to argue for "a just transition and greener jobs".

"Workers don't feel like they have their voices heard," she said. "But joining protests like this is how we do it."

"We need more young people that are passionate about fighting climate change in trade unions."

"And we need to tell them that, when we organise together as workers, this is when we are most effective."

Eva, a socialist student from Edinburgh, agreed. "In the climate fight, it's us against them," she told Socialist Worker.

"Workers need to take hold of things. The climate is very fragile, but those in power won't do anything to save it because of the privileged position they are in."

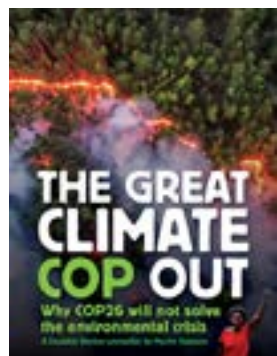
"We need a different kind of society, and as socialists on these demonstrations we need to be saying that."

"We also need to say that revolution is how we get there."

Longer versions of all the articles here are available at socialistworker.co.uk



Striking refuse and recycling workers in Glasgow were lifted by climate protests in the city



New from Socialist Worker

The Great Climate Cop Out—why Cop26 will not solve the environmental crisis by Martin Empson

Available for £2 from all Socialist Worker sellers and from our circulation department

Phone 020 7840 5601 Email swcicr@swp.org.uk

You can also read it online at bit.ly/39XqX1U

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings

What did Cop26 achieve, and how do we win a sustainable world?

BIRMINGHAM

Wed 24 Nov, 7pm
Priory Rooms
Quaker Meeting House
40 Bull St
B4 6AF

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE

Wed 24 Nov, 8pm
914-9548-1031

BOURNEMOUTH

Wed 17 Nov, 7pm
Friends Meeting House
16 Wharnccliffe Rd
BH5 1AH

BRADFORD

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
885-9187-7552

BRISTOL

Thu 18 Nov, 7.30pm
Kuumba Centre
20 Hepburn Road
BS2 8UD

CAMBRIDGE

Thu 25 Nov, 7.30pm
681-800-4408

CARDIFF

Wed 17 Nov, 7.30pm
630-181-4857

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH

Wed 24 Nov, 7.30pm
894-2628-7708

EAST MIDLANDS

Wed 17 Nov, 7pm
354-874-4790

EDINBURGH

Wed 24 Nov, 7.30pm
431-459-112

ESSEX

Thu 18 Nov, 7.30pm
832-8746-7480

HUDDERSFIELD

Wed 17 Nov, 6.30pm
290-168-1804

KENT

Thu 18 Nov, 8.15pm
434-623-8064

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
446-409-5118

LEEDS

Thu 25 Nov, 6pm
881-4770-0676

LIVERPOOL

Wed 17 Nov, 7pm
493-925-5919

LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 18 Nov, 7.30pm
854-8245-8715
Old School Rooms,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Road,
E5 0PU

LONDON — ISLINGTON

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
874-012-7970

LONDON — SOUTH

Wed 17 Nov, 7pm
497-196-1801

LONDON — SOUTH EAST

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
529-913-6390

LONDON — TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 17 Nov, 7.30pm
818-391-0420

LONDON — WEST AND NORTH WEST

Thu 18 Nov, 7.30pm
861-9481-1795

MANCHESTER

Wed 17 Nov, 7.15pm
323-178-7151

NEWCASTLE

Thurs 18 Nov, 7pm
368-595-2712

NORWICH

Thu 25 Nov, 7.30pm
906-652-5299

PORTSMOUTH

Wed 17 Nov, 7.30pm
488-934-2809

SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
528-174-9278

SOUTHAMPTON

Wed 17 Nov, 7.30pm
381-513-5080

SWANSEA & WEST WALES

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
902-964-963

YORK & SCARBOROUGH

Wed 17 Nov, 7pm
827-489-7492

BIRMINGHAM

Big government spending — is neoliberalism dead?

Wed 17 Nov, 7pm
281-634-5938

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE

After Sharon Graham's election — how can we rebuild our unions?

Wed 17 Nov, 8pm
914-9548-1031

BRIGHTON & HOVE

After the coup — resistance and revolution in Sudan
Thu 18 Nov, 6.30pm
874-3262-3749

CHESTERFIELD

'Levelling up' — can Johnson deliver?

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
828-532-8731

DEVON & CORNWALL

No to the 'hostile environment' — uniting against the Nationality and Borders Bill
Thu 18 Nov, 7.30pm
865-2972-2883

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH

Why we hate Mondays — capitalism and alienation
Wed 17 Nov, 7.30pm
894-2628-7708

GLASGOW

After the coup — resistance and revolution in Sudan

Thu 18 Nov, 7pm
Avant Garde

33-44 King St
Merchant City
G1 5QT

HASTINGS

Capitalism, Covid and mental distress
Wed 17 Nov, 7.30pm

880-5464-3685
The White Rock Hotel
1-10 White Rock
TN34 1JU

LEEDS

Let's talk about sex — Marxism and sexual liberation

Thu 18 Nov, 6pm
881-4770-0676

LONDON: HARINGEY

Why trans liberation doesn't undermine women's liberation
Wed 17 Nov, 7.30pm
459-388-1576

LONDON: NEWHAM

Booklaunch — Mindshift — how culture transformed the human brain
Wed 17 Nov, 7pm
818-391-0420

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

After the Unite union elections — how can we rebuild our unions?

Wed 24 Nov, 7.30pm
543-023-057

NORWICH

After the coup — resistance and revolution in Sudan
Thurs 18 Nov, 7.30pm
906-652-5299

OXFORD & THAMES VALLEY

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The Socialist Workers Party continues to hold mostly online meetings during the pandemic. This ensures that there can still be collective and safe discussion, organising and actions. Occasionally branches will hold in-person meetings with precautions taken for a safe environment.

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Rebellious defiance in the face of Thatcher's bigotry

New documentary, *Rebel Dykes*, remembers the exuberance—and febrile politics—of London's underground lesbian movement, writes **Nicola Field**

SIX YEARS in the making, *Rebel Dykes* is a hilarious tribute-on-speed to a defiant DIY London lesbian subculture.

The film is adrenalinised by sounds of Riot Grrl, Queercore and post-punk.

It packs archive footage, animation and photography with present-day interviews. They feature performance artist Fisch, trans activist Roz Caveney, the “mighty” DJs Sleeze Sisters (Trill and Pom), photographer Del Grace and Britpop guitarist Debbie Smith.

In the 1980s, working-class lesbians escaping provincial isolation found a politicising environment of openness, youthful exuberance and sex-positivity.

This was the era of Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council. It was abolished by Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher ostensibly for supporting lesbian and gay rights, and the first “gay lessons” in schools.

Being sacked, evicted, assaulted, arrested or having your children removed because of your sexuality were routine.

Nevertheless, a lesbian grapevine was being outstripped by experimental women-only nights at gay pubs and clubs.

Emerging from the anti-nuclear Greenham peace camp, the *Rebel Dykes*, with anarcho-punk style—it was possible then to live on benefits—forged a sex-positive anti-franchise.

It culminated in the Chain Reaction fetish club at the otherwise all-male Market Tavern in Vauxhall, south London. The film delivers with eye-popping footage—check the spaghetti-wrestling!—and reminiscences. With the defeat of the Great



THE FILM mixes archive footage, photography and animation

Miners' Strike in 1985 came a tragic detour from the crucial question “who is our enemy?”

One former separatist recalls, “I wouldn't even get a male kitten.”

Some accused the *Rebel Dykes* of flirting with fascism. Like all political movements, it was full of contradictions.

I was a *Rebel Dyke*. I took drugs, wore studded wristbands and DMs. Trill and Pom clipped my hair.

I saw this community care for its vulnerable members, and learned how sexual freedom connects with opposing

privatisation, the NHS cuts and war.

As veteran activist Lisa Power asserts, the campaign against Thatcher's vicious Clause 28—which prohibited “the teaching of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship” united the LGBT+ splinters.

Alongside mass demos, rebel dykes abseiled in the House of Lords, and invaded the BBC.

Thanks to the Labour party's betrayal, Section 28 became law. But a new class unity was born, which is not acknowledged in this film.

Activists in teaching and government unions, of all sexualities and gender identities, opposed Clause 28 tenaciously. They were able to build on the equalities policies pushed through by the National Union of Mineworkers in 1986. That work continues today.

This film, a must-see contribution to LGBT+ history which positions itself lovingly within the subculture it explores, is accompanied by an exciting educational archive at rebeldykeshistoryproject.com

In Picturhouse cinemas from Saturday 27 November

IDLES showcase changing sound on album *Crawler*

MUSIC

CRAWLER

By IDLES, out on Friday 12 November

IDLES HAVE been busy. It's barely a year since their last album, *Ultra Mono*, and they're already back with a new one.

And they're not just churning out the same old stuff either. New album *Crawler* is hailed as an experimentation with new sounds and styles.

It's certainly more introspective than some of their previous work. The

theme running throughout the album is vocalist Joe Talbot's battle with substance abuse—and a car crash he had when driving while high.

The subject matter demands something maybe more reflective—more sober so to speak.

So there's a lot more singing from Talbot than perhaps we're used to.

This self-reflection means there aren't so many of the overtly political tunes that IDLES have become known for.

But they are still IDLES—and this is still



The cover of IDLES new album, *Crawler*

punk. Even the most sedate tracks are laced with their signature anger and menace.

And their politics and wit are still there too.

Listen out on “The New Sensation” for a sarcastic jibe at last year's government ads encouraging young ballet dancers to retrain in “cyber.”

Maybe it's more accurate to say that IDLES haven't changed—but they have developed. And it makes for one of their best albums yet.

Nick Clark

STREAMING

MAID

Available now on Netflix

MAID STARTS on a thrilling note—a young woman escapes a cabin with her daughter in the middle of the night. But this isn't an easy getaway, and Alex, played by Margaret Qualley, doesn't get very far for a long time indeed.

She's fleeing abuse at the hands of her partner Sean. Bouncing between a domestic violence shelter, spare rooms, couches, and even a ferry terminal, she is desperate to leave Sean. But everything seems to conspire to bring her back.

To get away this, she takes a job as a maid, cleaning the houses of everyone from the superrich, to hoarders whose houses are libraries of teetering tat.

Alex's life is hard. She's caught between caring for three year old Maddy and her mother Paula, who is also a victim of domestic abuse.

And she's constantly on the edge of complete destitution. An on-screen bank balance graphic decreases with every bottle of bleach she buys, and



Alex takes a job as a cleaner

every trip to the petrol station.

Alex catches a few lucky breaks—but sympathetic individuals can only help her so much, and there is usually a catch.

It's almost too trite to say, but *Maid* shows really well how individuals can slip through a system not designed to actually help people.

But this does stand up as a drama, not a worthy look at the poor state of the US social security system.

Qualley engages in every episode, and Nick Robinson's Sean toes the perfect line between menacing and, at times, completely pathetic.

It's easy to see why *Maid* has been so popular on Netflix.

It's extremely good, and easily one of the best TV programmes of the year.

It's pacy, darkly funny at points, and avoids the pitfalls of either dwelling on Alex's suffering or portraying her as a superhero survivor.

Sarah Bates

I CANNOT see how in the short term things could have gone any better,” wrote British spy Norman Reddaway as six months of massacres ended in Indonesia.

Up to a million ordinary, unarmed people had been killed at the orders of Indonesia’s new right wing dictator general Suharto—and Reddaway was delighted.

Two years earlier, in 1964, the British government had sent him to nearby Singapore to act as “coordinator of political warfare” against Indonesia.

Reddaway later said his job was “to do anything I could do to get rid of Sukarno”—Indonesia’s president.

Secret British government documents, only recently released to the National Archives, now reveal what Reddaway meant.

Sukarno was trying to push what remained of the British Empire out of southeast Asia (see right). What’s more, he was backed by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI)—one of the largest communist parties in the world.

Yet Sukarno’s vision of national independence rested on some authoritarian measures and military power. It left him relying on some right wing generals, supported and trained by the US.

For its part, the PKI was focussed on electoral alliances with “progressive” capitalists such as Sukarno.

This was the legacy of an order from Stalin to communist parties across the world, designed to find allies for Russia among the rulers of other capitalist countries.

I N INDONESIA, it left the PKI vulnerable against the generals—and its members completely unprepared for the onslaught to come.

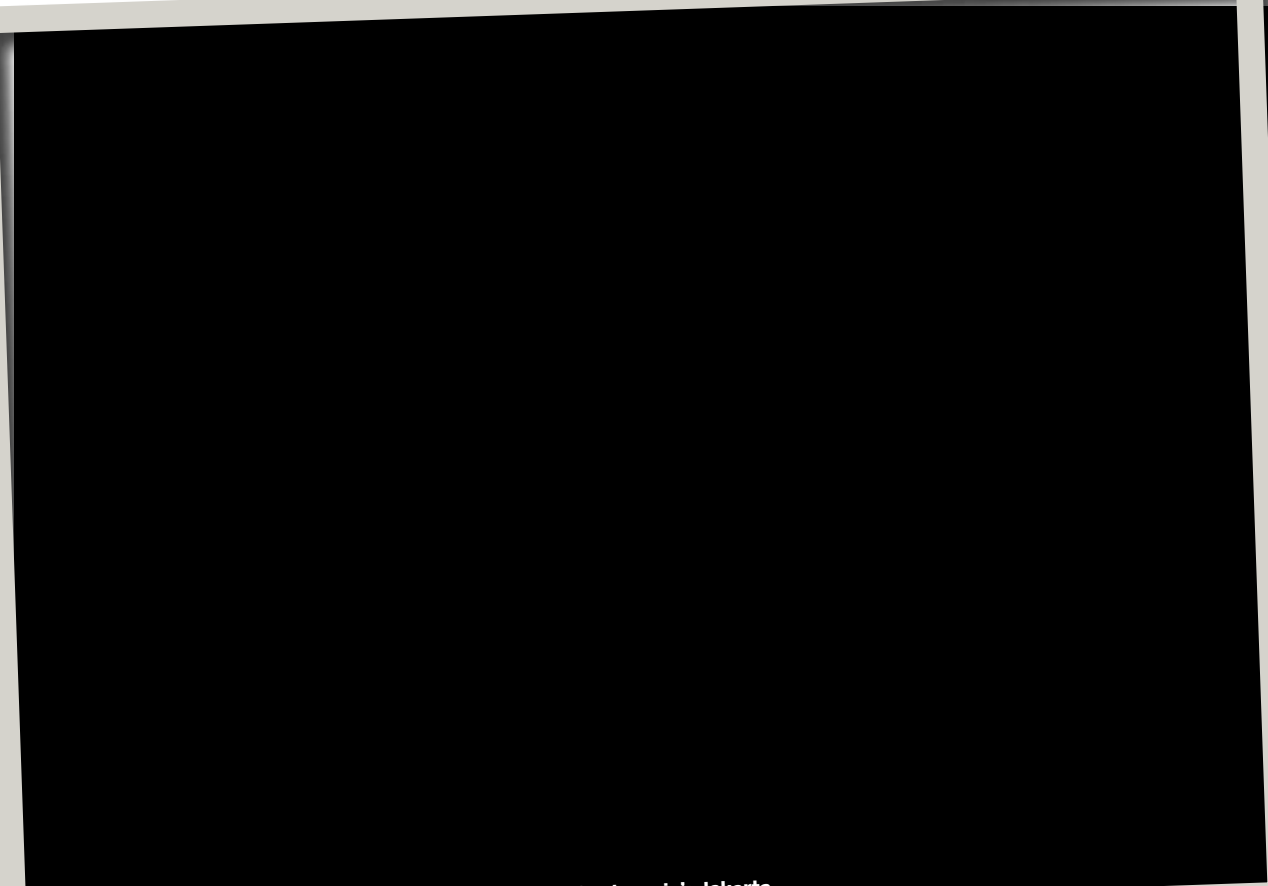
Backed by Britain and the US, Suharto began his horrific campaign on 1 October 1965—justified as an attempt to stop a supposed coup the night before.

This “coup” was an apparently botched operation by a group of mid-ranking officers loyal to president Sukarno calling themselves the 30 September movement.

The officers arrested several senior generals, who they accused of a US-backed plot against Sukarno, and ended up killing six of them.

It’s still not clear what exactly went on. There are varying theories. One is that the officers were doing exactly what they said—protecting Sukarno against the US-backed generals.

Some theories say parts of the PKI’s leadership were in some way involved. Others suggest it could all have been a setup by Suharto. A sort of double bluff in which he encouraged the



SUSPECTED COMMUNISTS held in Tangerang, a suburb of Indonesia’s Jakarta

INDONESIA’S COMMUNIST SLAUGHTER

The British incited the massacre of the Indonesian left for the Western imperial gain, explains Nick Clark

action to move against it and take office himself.

Whatever it was, it gave Suharto an excuse to execute a move long hoped and planned for by the US and Britain.

A recent book on the takeover, *The Jakarta Method*, was written by journalist Vincent Bevins. He states that as early as September 1964, “The CIA listed Suharto in a secret cable as one of the army generals it considered to be ‘friendly’ to US interests and anticommunist.”

“The cable also put forward the idea of an anti-communist military-civilian coalition that could gain power in a succession struggle.”

Suharto declared himself



They threw bodies into rivers, hiding them in caves, dumping them in mass graves

leader of the armed forces and ordered the soldiers commanded by the 30 September movement to stand down or he would attack. He then told Sukarno to leave the capital city of Jakarta.

A propaganda campaign followed, clearly prepared well in advance.

Suharto ordered the closure of all non-military controlled media outlets. The remaining newspapers and radio stations were full of stories blaming the PKI, along with false stories about how the six generals died.

They claimed the PKI had been secretly stockpiling weapons and digging mass graves for its victims. Some of this

was planted in the media by US and British spies—it’s what Reddaway had been sent to do in 1964.

Even US National Security Archives historian Bradley Simpson says, “It is highly likely that a key element of US and British covert operations in this period involved the creation of ‘black propaganda’—fake news—in Indonesia.”

Some of the newly-released documents in Britain’s National Archives reveal how this “black propaganda” incited the massacres that followed.

From an office in Singapore a team of British spies produced radio broadcasts, and a newsletter they pretended was written by Indonesians abroad.

They sent this to about 1,500 recipients in Indonesia, including newspapers, soldiers and politicians.

“We demand in the name of all patriotic people that this communist cancer be cut out of the body of the state,” they wrote. The PKI was, “Now a wounded snake. Now is the time to kill it before it has a chance to recover.”

T H E M A S S murder began on 7 October. Over six months the army carried out a systematic plan to arrest and murder PKI members and supporters, trade unionists and members of other left groups.

Using torture, the army extracted “confessions” from some of the PKI prisoners, and often raped and sexually abused the women.

Then they carried out mass executions. They threw bodies into rivers, hiding them in caves, dumping them in mass graves—or left them out in the open for everyone to see.

Some five percent of the population on the island of Bali was killed. In East Java, they left the bodies of mutilated women on the side of the road.

Britain’s phony newsletters urged them on throughout. One praised “the fighting services and the police” for “doing an excellent job”.

An equal—or even greater—number of prisoners were put to slave labour in prison camps for years.

In some cases, prisoners found themselves working for US companies that moved in after Suharto’s takeover, such as a Goodyear tyres rubber plant.

By March 1966 Suharto was mostly done, and he officially replaced Sukarno as Indonesia’s president, laying the basis for a Western-backed dictatorship that lasted until 1998.

All that was left for Reddaway was “to conceal the fact that the butcheries have taken place with the encouragement of the generals.”

Britain’s and the US’s interests were secured. Indonesia’s new leaders were murderers but, wrote Reddaway, they “will do us better than the old gang.”

PKI members and sympathisers rounded up in Bali

Labour government fully backed the US violence

B RITAIN HAD a Labour government at the time of the massacres. Its prime minister, Harold Wilson, is sometimes presented as some kind of left winger.

But like every Labour leader, Wilson was committed to preserving the health and interests of the British state.

For a start, that meant trying to keep hold of what little power Britain had as an empire.

Some 20 years earlier, another Labour government—led by Clement Attlee—had waged war on Indonesia to hold on to colonies in southeast Asia.

But Sukarno’s resistance made occupation impossible—as did a strike by Indian, Indonesian and British seafarers who refused to carry troops.

By 1965, Britain was again trying to shore up its power in southeast Asia.

This time Britain planned to create a supposedly “independent” new state, Malaysia, out of its old colonies—right on Indonesia’s border.

Sukarno declared a policy of “konfrontasi”—a sort of border war against British soldiers. So Wilson

wanted him gone. Behind this was an even bigger strategy for British power.

Britain’s empire had collapsed, and the US had taken its place as a dominant imperial power. Wilson wanted to carve out a place for Britain as the US’s junior partner.

He also tried to convince the left that this would allow a Labour government to restrain the US’s worst excesses.

Restraint

In reality, there was no restraint.

The US saw Communist parties in southeast Asia, allied to its rivals Russia and China, as a challenge to its power.

It was already waging war against Communists in Vietnam—backed by Wilson.

And it was worried that the KPI—at three million members—would soon become the government in Indonesia.

That’s why it organised and supported the massacre, backed by Britain.

When Labour’s politicians today talk about supporting the US as a “force for good in the world”, we should remember what that meant in Indonesia.



Labour prime minister Harold Wilson backed the slaughter

READ MORE

● **The Jakarta Method—Washington’s Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World** by Vincent Bevins, £22.99

● **The Blood Never Dried—A people’s history of the British empire** John Newsinger, £13.99

● **The Empire Strikes Back** Socialist Review article by John Newsinger bit.ly/JNSR189

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COMMENT

Why racism is not ‘banter’

Yuri Prasad explains how the scandal at Yorkshire County Cricket Club shows the fight against racist bullying must continue

THREE YEARS ago former Yorkshire spin bowler Azeem Rafiq went public with allegations of racism directed against him by people at the club.

He said that he had regularly been called “Paki” by teammates and staff.

Yorkshire at first did nothing, but then reluctantly launched an investigation that admitted Rafiq had been a victim of “racial harassment and bullying”.

Former England batsman Gary Ballance this week admitted using racist language against his one-time teammate, and said that this was now a source of great regret.

But Ballance moved quickly from contrition to the defensive.

He said his remarks had been part of a “friendly verbal attack... in the spirit of friendly banter”.

Yorkshire’s report seems to fully accept this line, even censoring Rafiq for allegedly using the term “Zimbo” in reference to Ballance’s heritage as a white Zimbabwean.

Refuge

The “friendly banter” refrain, so long the refuge of many a racist, may have convinced Yorkshire’s board. But few others are taken in by it.

Even Tory minister Sajid Javid was moved to say, “Paki” is not banter.

Although some action has now been taken, the “banter” defence is now so worthless because of something that Javid’s Tories have sworn to defeat—the anti-racist movement.

Campaigning over generations forced racist “jokes” from prime time television into comedy’s gutter.

News papers such as The Sun told us this is “political correctness gone mad”—and, “You can’t say ANYTHING anymore.”

But the effect of fighting over racism in public life

CRICKETER AZEEM Rafiq was regularly racially abused

changed what was deemed acceptable in schools, workplaces and wider society across Britain.

It created a space for those who were the butt of racist, sexist and homophobic jokes to speak out, and it emboldened many against oppression.

That meant people being able to explain just how upsetting they found the experience or how it robbed them of confidence and often forced them to hide their true feelings.

It also meant others who saw or heard such comments called out the offensive behaviour when victims felt tied by the accusations of “overreacting” or “being sensitive”.

The anti-racist, and anti-oppression, mood also opened up whole new areas for discussion.

In schools and colleges that has included a long-needed discussion of what is taught and how.

While in workplaces, the question of what attitude unions should take towards racism and bullying has become a vital question that has led to strikes and action.

That’s why anti-racists are right to take up issues that others are content to dismiss as “just banter”.

Opportunity Sometimes such episodes are an opportunity for people to patiently explain why a particular word or phrase can be offensive.

But sometimes behind the offence there lies a deliberate attempt to stoke conflict and division.

Whichever it is, it’s important to challenge oppressive statements.

Often this can encourage other people to speak out as well.

Much as Javid will hate it, his attack on the cricket authorities rests on the climate of anti-racism created largely by the left.

Earlier this year the government published the report of its widely discredited Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

Its chair, the right winger Tony Sewell, said that he had demolished claims of structural racism, and that there was no evidence “of actual institutional racism”.

Gleeeful Tories rushed to TV studios to explain that Britain was a “model of racial equality”.

Yet when faced with the example of Rafiq’s treatment at the hands of Yorkshire cricket, even a committed culture war warrior such as Javid is forced to admit something bad is going on.

As Rafiq said this week, “This is about institutional racism and abject failures to act by numerous leaders at Yorkshire County Cricket Club and in the wider game.”



It’s important to be confident to challenge oppressive statements

Token strikes won't win university battles

WORKERS AT 59 universities across Britain have voted for strikes that are now set to happen before Christmas.

It's a tribute to local activists that they delivered big votes for action.

Roddy Slorach, a worker at Imperial College London, told Socialist Worker, "The results are particularly remarkable for the ballot campaign that lasted just 17 days and took place at the start of term."

"This was a time many staff were returning to campus for the first time since the Covid-19 outbreak."

Anger

The votes are an expression of rising anger in the sector about long-term trends which have seen managements turn universities into profit centres with learning on the cheap.

Workers are fighting attacks such as an assault of pensions that would reduce the guaranteed retirement income of a typical worker by 35 percent.

They also want action to reverse years of discrimination, attacks on permanent contracts and falling pay.

UCU union members voted in two ballots, one over



UCU UNION strikers on the march in 2020. Hard-hitting action is needed again

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

pensions, one over what is known as the four fights.

These are better pay, reduced workload, opposition to casualisation and a drive towards equality by closing the disability, gender and ethnic pay gaps.

Each university's votes were counted separately. To overcome the hurdles of the anti-union laws, they had to

both vote for action and have a turnout of at least 50 percent of eligible voters.

Overall, 54 branches reached this target over the four fights, 37 over pensions.

Some of these are duplicates so in total the union will allow 59 branches to strike over one or the other dispute.

In both ballots, there were big majorities for strikes and

the overall turnout in both was just over 50 percent. But that doesn't count under the law.

Strikes now need to start as soon as possible, and not just going through the motions.

In 2018, when a similar number of universities voted for pension strikes, the UCU called rapidly escalating action. It announced 14 strike days with two days one

week followed by three-day, four-day and five-day walk-outs in the following weeks.

In 2019-20 the union called eight days of strikes from 25 November to 4 December and then more action in the new year—22 days in all.

But UCU general secretary Jo Grady is recommending a wholly inadequate strategy to the union's higher education

committee which was due to meet on Friday of this week.

As the UCU Left organisation, which Socialist Worker supports, says, Grady is "proposing one day of strike in each dispute before Xmas."

"This is token action of the type that the previous general secretary was derided for."

The UCU Left statement adds, "The threat of a maximum of two days' action, with nothing more promised for the spring term, will not worry the employers."

Escalating

The lessons of the strikes over the last few years is that only militant, escalating action has a chance of success.

Short strikes and separating the disputes will be brushed aside by vice-chancellors and the Tories.

Grady's plan will lead to delay, disillusion and defeat.

Every activist has to fight for escalating action this term and re-ballots of the branches who didn't hit the threshold so that they can join the strikes in 2022.

Militant strikes can win support from students and other trade unionists.

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British troops murder, burn and kidnap with impunity in Kenya

The British Army claims to be in Kenya to avert the threat of terror. But their presence has resulted in a series of brutal crimes with no justice for the victims, argues Isabel Ringrose

AGNES WANJIRU was discovered beaten and stabbed to death in a septic tank at the Lion's Court Hotel in the Kenyan town of Nanyuki in June 2012 two months after she disappeared.

Wanjiru, a 21 year old mother of a newborn baby, was last seen with British soldiers. An inquest later concluded that one or more soldiers must have killed her.

According to The Sunday Times, a man known as Soldier X has been separately named by at least four members of the Duke of Lancaster Regiment as the culprit.

One of them says he reported the identity of the killer to senior officers but was brushed off.

The appalling details were so well-known that soldiers wrote about them on Facebook, with disgusting references to septic tanks and "ghosts".

The case has highlighted the way British soldiers act in Kenya and—nine years on—was reopened last week.

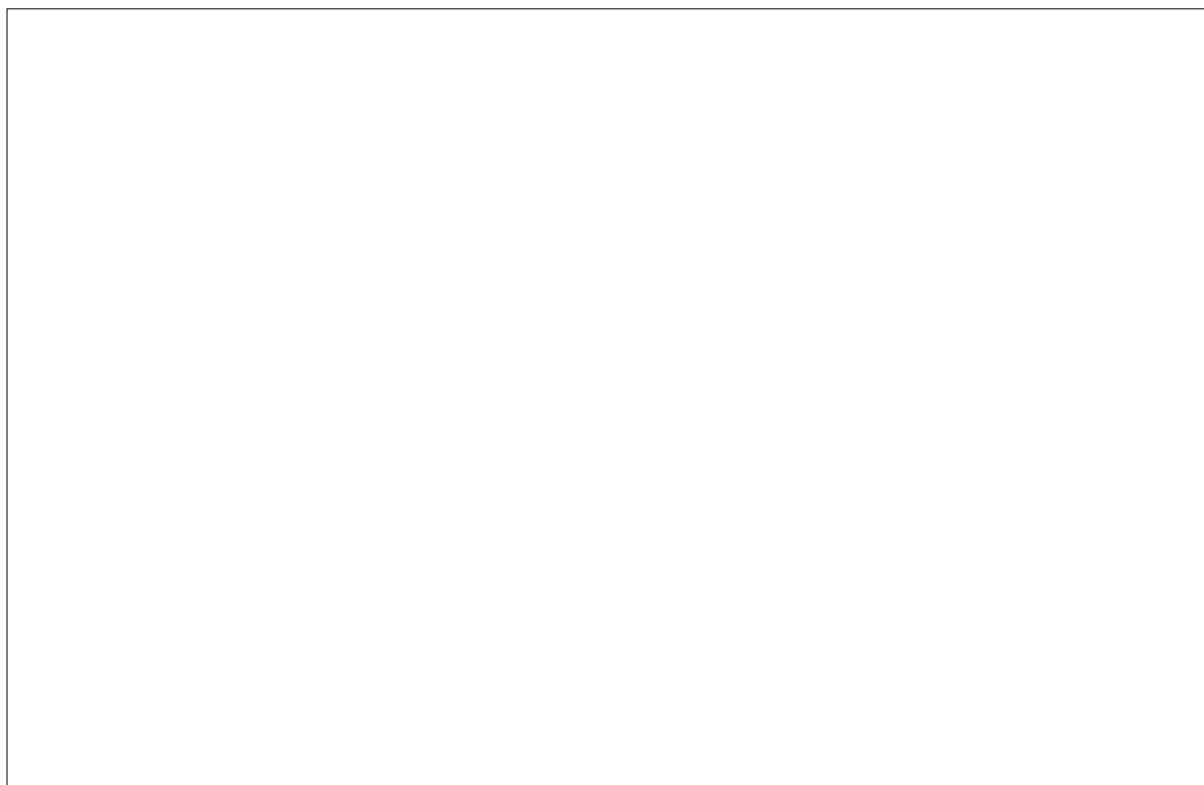
The British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK)—a permanent training unit—is based in Nanyuki.

Britain still sends six infantry battalions a year—around 10,000 soldiers—for eight-week exercises to BATUK.

The climate "presents an opportunity for British soldiers to improve their skills through training," says the army. Britain says its forces can support African states responding to terrorism.

In reality it suits Britain to be involved in Kenya to bully and bribe governments.

"Our Armed Forces help make the world a more stable place," the army claims. The reality is the opposite. The story of Wanjiru—a bloody



THOUSANDS OF British troops complete training exercises in the Nanyuki military base in Kenya

murder and a cover-up—isn't an isolated case.

A group of 1,400 Kenyans went to court in October to put in a compensation claim against the British government.

Vehicle

They blame British troops for burning down nearly 50 square kilometres of land. One man, Linus Murangiri, was crushed to death by a vehicle during the incident.

Local people rushed to help put out

the fire in Lolldaiga Conservancy on 23 March.

A British soldier in Kenya posted on Snapchat during the incident, "Caused a fire, killed an elephant and feel terrible about it but hey-ho, when in Rome."

BATUK has also been the centre of several disputes. In 2013, an Army sergeant fatally shot an armed Kenyan.

He believed they were intruding and committing theft. This dispute was over whether British personnel should

be tried for violations of Kenyan law.

In September 2015, an agreement between then prime minister David Cameron and Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta clarified that British soldiers would be tried in Kenya—but not necessarily according to Kenyan law.

Up to 50 Kenyans are also suspected to have been killed by unexploded British artillery since 1945.

A ten-year-old Kenyan boy was alleged to have been abducted by British troops after he had been injured by British weapons.

Armed resistance and struggle

MAU MAU was the militant wing of a growing movement for political representation.

The British declared a state of emergency in 1952. The colonial regime imposed fines and other punishments to break Mau Mau support.

By 1954 the capital Nairobi was the centre of Mau Mau operations. British soldiers sealed off the city.

After two weeks 20,000 Mau Mau suspects were taken to Langata camp, and 30,000 were deported to reserves.

Within the



Mau Mau resistance fighters

overcrowded reserves the British built a system of detention camps. Disease swept through the camps. They ignored medical reports were ignored and lied about conditionst.

Within 18 months, over a million Kikuyu in reserves lived in huts surrounded by trenches and barbed wire.

Mau Mau suspects faced capital punishment. Prisoners were flogged until death, set alight, and had their ears cut.

Castration and electric shocks were widespread. Women had bottles and knives thrust into their vaginas. Men were dragged behind cars, whipped and bayoneted.

The brutal history of British colonialism in Kenya

BRITISH interference in Kenya began in 1888 with the arrival of the Imperial British East Africa Company. In 1895 Britain set up the East Africa Protectorate to rule the area.

By 1920 the East Africa Protectorate was turned into a colony and renamed Kenya. British and European colonists made use of the fertile land and became rich off coffee and tea farming.

The government seized around 7,000,000 acres of land in the fertile hilly regions. By 1948,

1,250,000 Kikuyu tribe members had ownership of 2,000 square miles, while 30,000 British settlers owned 12,000 square miles.

Settlers introduced harsh land ownership and agricultural restrictions on the displaced Kikuyu.

Workers were badly treated—settlers argued natives "were as children and should be treated as such".

After the First World War new taxes and reduced wages as well as new settlers led to new anti-colonial and trade



British troops search for Mau Mau rebels in Karoibangi, 1954

union movements.

In the late 1930s, the government began to introduce marketing restrictions, stricter educational supervision and excluded local people from political participation.

As a result of growing anger, the first attempt at a native political party came in 1944, becoming the Kenya Africa Union in 1946.

It demanded access to white-owned land.

By 1952 the banned Mau Mau (see column), also known as Kenya Land

and Freedom Army, began a campaign of attacks against settlers.

Following the Mau Mau conflict in 1956, a programme of reform gave land to the Kikuyu, with a relaxation of crop bans on Kenyans.

It was not until 1960 that native Kenyan majority rule was established, with the Kenyan Africa National Union taking control.

The Colony of Kenya and Protectorate of Kenya came to a welcome end on 12 December 1963, as independence was won.

IN BRIEF

Protest in support of Azeem Rafiq

AROUND 80 people joined a protest in solidarity with cricketer Azeem Rafiq outside Yorkshire cricket club's Headingley ground last Saturday.

Speakers denounced the racist culture at Yorkshire that destroyed Azeem's career, and the club's dismissal of sustained racist insults as "banter".

Local campaigners, including cricket coach Taj Butt, university lecturer Dr Abdul-Bashir Shaikh and Sam Kirk from Stand Up to Racism called for the resignation of the entire board at the club.

They demanded wider action to root out institutional racism throughout cricket and sport in general.

Barry Pavier

Wrexham cable workers out for pay

UNITE UNION members working for Prysmian Cables in Wrexham last week began a series of eight 24-hour strikes throughout November and December over pay. The action involves 200 workers.

Nottingham trams are off the rails

WORKERS EMPLOYED by Nottingham Trams Limited struck last Saturday over pay.

Sue Dowling, from the GMB union said, "Working through the pandemic has been really hard.

"We don't feel we had any recognition. We normally receive a Christmas bonus but this year that was taken away from us."

GKN closes after strikes called off

AFTER postponing strikes at the GKN factory in Birmingham, the Unite union has announced that the company is to close the plant

Some 500 workers at the car component factory will now lose their jobs and have "little option" but to accept a redundancy scheme.

The company "refused to consider" Unite's plans to save the factory and push ahead with manufacturing electric cars. It was wrong to call off the strikes.

Maxi pay rise for BMW Mini workers

STRIKES HAVE been called off at the BMW Mini plant in Oxford after lorry drivers employed by Imperial Logistics accepted a deal.

Workers voted to strike after being paid £3 an hour less than agency workers on the same contract.

The improved pay offer is worth 27 percent over two years. Workers have also secured the continuation of unsocial hours' payments and lump sum payment of £3,500 back pay.

ANTI-RACISM



FIGHTING DEPORTATIONS to Jamaica in 2020

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Fight the Tories' return to racist deportations

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE HOME Office was planning this week to deport up to 50 people to the Caribbean, including some who came to Britain as children.

A flight to Jamaica was set for Wednesday this week. The list of those targeted included one person who arrived when he was three months old.

The Home Office's deportation flight includes people with no criminal convictions, busting its own myth that these flights contain dangerous criminals.

The mother of a man scheduled to be on the flight said there is "no one back home for him".

"He went to school, he went to college, he has four kids and they still want to deport him," said Marvalyn Williams, whose son Akeem Finley is facing deportation

Bella Sankey, the director of Detention Action, said, "The Home Office has spent Black

History Month planning a mass expulsion of black British residents.

"This government's current citizenship and deportation laws build on colonial injustices and are inhumane.

"Until they are brought in line with basic human decency, airlines should refuse to collaborate."

According to a survey by Movement for Justice, of 21 Jamaicans detained in for the flight 15 of them have lived in Britain since childhood.

One man came 31 years ago at the age of nine and was raised by his Windrush-generation aunt after his mother's death in Jamaica.

Concerned

Seth Ramocan is Jamaica's high commissioner in London. He said, "I am deeply concerned about cases in which persons are being removed having lived in the UK since childhood and have no known relations in Jamaica or familiarity with Jamaica."

Before a previous charter flight to Jamaica in December 2020, a deal was made between the Home Office and the Jamaica high commission.

It agreed that no one would be on the plane who had come at the age of 12 or under.

Movement for Justice also reports that a man trapped in a detention centre was denied medication for HIV for over a week.

It also claims that at least four of them have a history of sexual and physical abuse as children in Jamaica.

And others are potential victims of trafficking and grooming.

At least 24 children are also facing separation from their fathers.

But already some people have been pulled from the flight after legal challenges.

Covid cases are also being reported in the detention centres.

The Tories' racist and arbitrary deportation flights must be resisted.

CIVIL SERVICE

New action coming at the DVLA?

A NEW ballot for strikes by workers at a major government office in Swansea was set to end on Wednesday of this week.

PCS union members at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) are in a long running battle over coronavirus safety. Bosses want to force workers back into the office, despite many workers saying it is unsafe.

■ DRIVING EXAMINERS have voted to accept an agreement between PCS union leaders and bosses in a dispute over workload and safety.

Workers had voted to strike over bosses' plans to add an extra test to the working day. After the vote, bosses agreed to suspend the plans for a year for talks with union leaders.

Workers backed the agreement by more than 90 percent on a turnout of 69 percent.

REFUSE

Bins strike over low pay in Sheffield

STRIKING REFUSE workers marched to and protested at Sheffield town hall on Monday after rejecting their bosses' latest pay offer.

The GMB union members who are outsourced to Veolia voted for strikes last month.

But action was called off for talks with the company.

After Veolia offered workers a below-inflation pay rise, which would mean a pay cut, workers voted again to strike.

On the picket lines and at the protest workers called for an "end to rubbish pay."

"GMB members have gone above and beyond over the last 18 months to serve the people of Sheffield, whilst putting their own health and safety at risk" said GMB organiser Lee Parkinson.

"All they are asking for is some acknowledgement of the effort they put in."

INSULATE BRITAIN



SUPPORTERS OF Insulate Britain blocked Parliament Square last week as part of their campaign to win action to combat climate change

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

CWU UNION CONFERENCE

The CWU union slashes its funding for Keir Starmer's Labour Party

MEMBERS OF the postal and telecoms workers' CWU union have voted to end all but their most basic national funding to the Labour Party.

The decision, taken at a special online conference on Sunday, comes after another union—the food workers' Bfawu—split completely from Labour in September.

The vote shows that many union activists are angry at Labour's shift to the right under leader Keir Starmer.

CWU general secretary Dave Ward said, "The current Labour leadership is failing to connect with working class communities and that was made clear by the scores of our members who spoke passionately in the debate." But

the vote is also a sign of tensions between Labour's leadership and the union leaders who support and fund the party.

The motion, proposed by the union's leading national executive council, said, "In more recent years, our relationship with Labour has always been underpinned by the idea that the Party will not get something for nothing."

It echoes the promises of the Unite union's recently-elected general secretary Sharon Graham, who has promised a "return to the workplace" over a focus on Labour.

It's also similar to Ward's message to Labour when he was elected CWU general secretary in 2015, while Ed Milliband was still Labour leader. Milliband

and previous Labour leaders Gordon Brown and Tony Blair had marginalised union leaders' influence in the Labour Party.

They also rejected even the limited reforms and protections that union leaders fund Labour to deliver.

That's why Ward and some other union leaders backed Jeremy Corbyn as leader. As Ward told Socialist Worker in 2016, "I stood for general secretary on a ticket that said Labour's not going to get something for nothing."

Now some union leaders worry that Starmer will marginalise them again—and will return to attacks on workers. The CWU's motion also complained that "the Labour Party is failing to break through and seems more concerned with

factional infighting than it does reaching out to working people."

But despite their anger at Starmer, most union leaders won't break from Labour.

Ward opposed outright disaffiliation from Labour. Instead, the motion said the union would only fund Labour candidates "that support CWU industrial and political aims."

Breaking from Starmer can't simply mean relying on other Labour politicians working under his leadership.

The alternative is the power workers have in unions—to fight over low pay, workers' rights, against racism, and climate change—with strikes and mass struggle.

Nick Clark

FIRE AND REHIRE

Engineers step up fight—but more needed to win

by ISABEL RINGROSE

WEETABIX STRIKERS escalated their strikes to four days a week from Monday.

The 80 engineers and members of Unite union are fighting against fire and rehire plans at factories in Kettering and Corby, Northamptonshire. New contracts not only mean worse shift patterns, but for some up to £5,000 less a year.

The workers had been striking for 48 hours a week since September.

Bosses brought in agency workers to scab on the strike. But strikers found that after every two-day strike for two days, they spent the rest of the week catching up on the work that didn't get done.

The escalation is an important step. The strike is an important early test for Unite's new general secretary Sharon Graham.

She has made it a high profile dispute in the union's campaign against fire and rehire.

Victory would show that fire and rehire can be resisted—and beaten.

So far Unite has waged a "leverage campaign" alongside the strike, with protests outside supermarkets targeting Weetabix.

This helps to build awareness and support for the strike—but it is not enough to win.

Strikers and Unite must consider further escalation. The best way to win would be an all-out, seven days a week, strike. Now, the strikers need more donations and solidarity



WEETABIX ENGINEERS on the picket line

PICTURE: UNITE EAST MIDLANDS

to fight for as long as is necessary. Unite should also look for ways to draw other workers at the plant into the dispute.

It should call members to mass protests and pickets at the gates. The beginning of the escalated action on Monday should have been an opportunity to do this.

Unite's priority has to be winning

this strike in the battle against fire and rehire.

Sharon Graham's first big campaign since becoming general secretary should reflect all the promises she made during the election.

●Donate to Unite East Midlands. Sort code: 60-83-01 Account number 20173975. Email messages of support to Sean.Kettle@uniteunion.org

CLARKS

Clarks strike needs support

AN ALL-OUT strike by 100 Clarks warehouse workers in Street, in Somerset, against a vicious fire and rehire attack is now approaching its sixth week.

Among many other reductions in pay and conditions, bosses at private equity company Lion Rock Capital are slashing basic pay from £11.16 an hour to £9.50.

They boasted that £9.50 was a "significant compromise" from their original plan to impose the minimum wage of £8.92. But the minimum wage is now due to rise to—guess what—£9.50 an hour.

The strikers urgently need more support from trades councils, trade unions and trade union branches urgently—with donations to the strike fund and visits to the picket line. **Dave Chapple**

●Donate to the strike fund using reference Clarks Strike Pay Account Name: Community Account number: 34042733 Sort code: 60-83-01
●Send messages of support to dfrancois@community-tu.org
●Join the solidarity march and rally, 11am, Sat Nov 13, Westway Warehouse, Westway, Street, Somerset, BA16 0LN

PAY CAMPAIGNS

No 'pay rises' below inflation

WITH INFLATION at the rate it is, many strikers are not winning the huge pay rises their unions claim they are.

The bosses' preferred measure of inflation is the Consumer Prices Index is currently 3.2 percent.

But the Retail Prices Index inflation rate—which gives a better indication for what people pay for goods and services—is currently at 4.9 percent.

And it looks set to rise even further.

So, if workers accept a 3 percent pay offer—as union leaders have recommended in some disputes—then under either index this is actually a pay cut.

In real terms, it's a pay cut of 1.9 percent.

With inflation set to worsen, unions cannot accept pay "rises" lower than 5 percent.

Around 150 plastic workers at Alpla in Wigan will receive a 4 percent pay "rise" backdated to January for those earning under £25,000 a year.

And staff on more than £25,000 will receive a pay rise of 3 percent from January.

From 2022, all staff will receive a pay rise of 3.25 percent.

So until 2022, workers have accepted a pay cut.

And the rise is not 6 percent as Unite claims, but just over 1 or 2 percent with inflation as it currently stands.

Workers shouldn't let union leaders dress up pay cuts as victories.

BUSES

STAGECOACH NORTH EAST

Strike on in Teesside—but suspended elsewhere

SOME 200 bus workers in Hartlepool and Stockton, Teesside, struck on Monday—their first of several planned strike days over pay.

Over 800 bus workers at Stagecoach North East had voted overwhelmingly to strike over bosses' "divide and rule" tactics on pay—with different rates at different depots.

But Unite called off strikes in Newcastle, South Shields and Sunderland after bosses made a new offer.

Workers at these depots are now voting on the new offer—and could re-join strikes from

Tuesday of next week if they reject it.

The union's tactics risk playing into the bosses' divide and rule plans.

No group of workers should be left to fight alone.

There was a huge 92 percent vote in favour of the strike with 94 percent voting for an additional overtime ban.

More strikes were set to take place on Wednesday and Friday of this week, and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of next week.

More are planned on 24, 26 and 30 November, and on 2 and 4 December.

STAGECOACH SOUTH WALES

Escalation in Blackwood, Brynmawr and Cwmbran

STAGECOACH workers in south Wales are set to escalate action after talks broke down.

Workers in the Unite union are demanding a wage of £10.50 an hour—in line with what Stagecoach workers are paid in some other parts of Britain.

Workers have already walked out for ten days at depots in Blackwood, Brynmawr and Cwmbran and will now strike continuously from Wednesday of next week to 10 January, 2022.

Unite Regional Officer Alan McCarthy said, "Drivers have seen their pay increase by less than 75p per hour between 2016 and 2020 whilst the

directors annual pay rose from £93,000 to £180,000.

"In the light of this gross hypocrisy our members are more resolute than ever and will not back down in this dispute."

●MORE THAN 250 bus drivers, based at Stagecoach depots in Kent and Sussex, are set to strike for seven days over pay.

The Unite union members planned action on 12, 15, 19, 22, 26 November and 3 and 6 December.

Stagecoach's low wages saw bosses reach profits of £60 million last year and hold £875 million in the bank.

Unite members rejected the bosses' latest offer of 2.1 percent to 4.3 percent.

ARRIVA NORTH WEST

Wrong to call off strike

THE UNITE union has called off a strike of 2,000 Arriva bus drivers in Liverpool, Manchester and the northwest of England following a pay offer.

Unite is calling on its members to accept a below-inflation, 3 percent pay rise—essentially a pay cut. This is the second time that Unite's leaders have called off action.

The workers had already rejected a 3 percent offer—and wanted a return to action.

But Unite is balloting them again over small "improvements."

Workers should refuse this and continue with plans to strike to win a proper pay rise.

OAKS PARK SCHOOL

Protest and strike for rep

WORKERS AT Oaks Park Secondary school in Redbridge, east London, began another 12 days of strikes on Tuesday of last week.

Strikers are determined not to give into the bullying head and the victimisation of their NEU union rep.

Workers have organised a day of action on Monday of next week.

Every education worker knows that intimidation and even fear exists in many of our schools. The campaign has taken the issue to the council and held lively protests at the town hall.

The Labour-run council has so far taken the head's side.

Miriam Scharf

●Protest at London City Hall, Mon 15 Nov, 5.30pm, SE1 2AA

STRIKES HIT SUDAN AND DEFY MILITARY

by CHARLIE KIMBER

SUDAN'S military leaders, that took control in a military coup last month, stepped up their assaults on democracy protesters last weekend.

But they still face waves of protests, street occupations and strikes that could topple them.

Last Sunday activists took over sections of major cities. They built barricades and kept out the authorities.

In many cases it was young activists who led the way, courageously refusing to back down even when the army arrived and began attacking people.

A new wave of strikes sparked as well, hitting schools, pharmacies, universities and other sectors. The army and police struck back.

A teachers' union said last Sunday that security forces used tear gas at the education ministry building for Khartoum State.

This was to break up a sit-in staged to oppose any handover to military appointees. They arrested 119 people, including 54 teachers.

"We organised a silent

SUDANESE PROTESTERS rally in the capital, Khartoum against the detention of civilian government members

stand against the decisions by al-Burhan outside the Ministry of Education," Mohamed al-Amin, a geography teacher, told the AFP news agency.

"Police later came and fired tear gas at us though we were simply standing on the streets and carrying banners."

In the Burri neighbourhood of capital Khartoum and across the river in the Omdurman area of Omdurman, police also used tear gas to break up protests.

But people still came on the streets, with women playing a leading role.

There were protests too in the cities of Medani,

Nyala and Atbara. Hundreds protested against the reappointment in local government of people loyal to the former regime of Omar al-Bashir.

Bashir was removed by strikes and protests in 2019

Most regional groups that oppose central government control have denounced

the coup. The Sudanese Revolutionary Front has also denounced the military.

It includes leading figures from Darfur and South Kordofan.

Local neighbourhood resistance committees, set up to organise food distribution, medical services and much more, continue in

some areas. Activists have now targeted this Saturday for a new round of major rallies under the slogan, "No negotiation, no partnership, no compromise."

Protesters' determination is not in doubt.

But there are serious questions of the resistance to the military.

The scale of mobilisation last weekend was smaller than the week before.

Instead of a million on the streets there was less involvement, with stalling of the furious outpouring.

Activists put up barricades that are then cleared by the security forces.

Strikes take place for one or two days but then workers return.

All of this strengthens the pressures towards a compromise deal (see below).

The only guaranteed way to force back the military is to push for a general strike that continues until all the generals are removed.

Combined with mass demonstrations, as well as strengthening and spreading the neighbourhood resistance committees, such action can still break the military's hold.

Coup's deals backed by the West will undermine Sudanese people

SUDAN'S MILITARY knows they face real resistance. So they are manoeuvring for a deal that will give the appearance of civilian control while they still pull the strings.

A host of regional and global powers have rushed to meet coup leader General Abdel-Fattah Burhan to ask him to do a quick deal. They fear that revolts in other parts of Africa and the Middle East might be encouraged.

Burhan's visitors included Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel and the US special envoy for the Horn of

Africa Jeffrey Feltman. It also included officers from the Israeli secret service Mossad, and senior envoys from the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Russia and the United Nations.

Any deal that Burhan endorses will be poisonous. It will be a front for a continuing military stranglehold over key parts of the economy.

It will also rule out any genuine settling of accounts for the army's role in the mass killings in Darfur from 2003 and the slaughter of protesters in Khartoum in June 2019.

The US and its allies say



A solidarity with Sudan protest in Oxford last Sunday

the coup must be reversed. But they will eagerly accept a compromise so long as it can be smuggled past the Sudanese people.

Western imperialists will also ensure that the neoliberal policies of the International Monetary Fund are added to any such deal.

Last week the Sudanese Professionals Association, which has played an important role in resistance to the coup, made a clear statement that it would not sign up to agreements with the military.

It also said mediation

initiatives that "seek a new settlement" between the military and civilian leaders would "reproduce and worsen" the country's crisis.

But such a deal can be defeated only if there are clear alternatives.

This is not time for compromises, but instead saying that the only place for the military is behind bars.

And instead of a transitional government there has to be one based on the neighbourhood committees and the networks that striking workers have created.